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A Race to Excellence or to the Bottom?
Exploring the State and Status of Correctional
Education in Scottish Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs)



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- **Annual budget**
 - SPS receives an annual budget of £382.3 Million of which £18 Million is spent on “purposeful activities”, including education (SPS, 2014).
- **Prison population in Scotland (2016 statistics)**
 - Male sentenced: 5551
 - Female sentenced: 266
 - Young offenders female – sentenced: 17
 - Young offenders male – sentenced: 264
- **Number of prions in Scotland**
 - 15 prisons in Scotland: 13 public and 2 private.

Prison – 2016	Ownership	Additional Information
	Public	Women/Young Offenders Institution (YOIs)
Dumfries	Public	
Edinburgh	Public	Some women
Glenochil - Tullibody	Public	
Greenock	Public	Some Women
Inverness	Public	
Polmont - Falkirk	Public	Young Offenders Institution (YOIs)
Low Moss - Bishopbriggs	Public	
Perth - Perth	Public	
Shotts - Shotts	Public	
Addiewell	Private	Sodexo Justice Services
Kilmarnock - Hurlford	Private	Serco
Grampian - Peterhead	Public	HMP and Young Offenders Institution (YOIs) and some women
Castle Huntly - Longforgan	Public	

Analytical Framework
Realist Evaluation

- Developed by Pawson (1989) and Pawson and Tilley (1997) and adopted by Duguid and Pawson (1998).
- Offers tools to explore suppositions behind (educational) programmes being evaluated
- Highlights theories, ideas and practices that can help explain why such programmes succeed or fail.
- Theories, ideas and practices are drawn from the experience of connected with the programmes concerned such as:
 - Instructional leaders (prison management),
 - Practitioners (teachers and prison staff),
 - Participants (prison inmates),
 - Policymakers (government officials)
- Realist evaluation attempts to discover what works and why, for whom and in what circumstances (Duguid and Pawson, 1998).

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Introduction

- As a devolved region, Scotland has powers over the criminal justice system, including the management of prisons (Audit Scotland 2005).
- Scottish Prison Service (SPS) recognises the need for prisoners to be involved in “purposeful” activities
 - To support the development of strengths and potential as well as addressing prisoner risks, needs and reform.
 - Key to this is the role that prison education: learning, vocational training and employment skills (Lyn et al. 2012; Audit Scotland (2012).
 - Education critical factor towards criminal desistance and enhance employment opportunities and help ease re-integration into the community (see SPS 2012; Anderson and Overy 2010).
- SPS spends a substantial amount (£18 million out of £382.3 million total budget in 2014) of its annual budget on educational related activities (Scottish Government 2014).



Education and Learning in Scottish YOIs

- Provision education and vocational skills in Scottish prisons is contracted out by a tender-based system.
- Two Further Education (FE) colleges currently provide this (2016-2021).
 - Fife College
 - New College Lanarkshire (SPS, 2016).
- Courses include
 - Education subjects: Arts programme, literacy and numeracy
 - Vocational training: bricklaying, painting, decorating, hairdressing/barbering, cleaning etc.
- With introduction of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in 2009 for 3-18 ages (Priestley and Humes, 2010), prison education in YOIs efforts are under way to align its provision the key aims of CfE encapsulated in the “four capacities”:
 - (a) successful leaners
 - (b) confident individuals
 - (c) responsible citizens
 - (d) effective contributors (SPS, nd).



Research Questions

1. What is the nature and extent of provision of prison education in Scottish YOIs ?
2. What resources (human and material) are available for prison education in Scottish YOIs? What is the quality of these resources? In what ways do these resources facilitate or hinder learning?
3. In general, how do young offenders’ engage with prison education ? If, at all, are there gender differences in the way male and females young offenders engage with prison education, and why?
4. What is the nature of prison life for young offenders? If at all, how does the prison environment impact on learning?
5. What should be done to improve prison education for young offenders in Scotland?

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Why this Study?



- Prisons “hard to reach” spaces and thus little for research particularly involving the education of incarcerated youth (Abrams, 2010).
- To date no scholarly study of prison academic programmes in Scotland exists, except:
 - Aspects of this included in annual reports by f HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.
 - Evaluations by professional bodies such as Education Scotland in collaboration with SPS.
 - Commissioned reports by SPS (Scottish Prison Service, nd; (PRT, 2003; HMIPS, 2015; Sapouna, 2015).
- While “in-house” reports reveal details only “insiders” many know, overall these self-selected evaluations are prone to the risk unintentional glossing over of difficult issues .
- SPS’s new strategic framework for education and learning skills running from 2016 to 2021, will need scholarly review by the time its fully implemented (SPS, 2016).

Tensions and Contestations in Prison
Education Research

- Paradox of provision: conflicting interests and ideologies between the education and penal systems.
- Need for prison education to appease different audience (Duguid and Pawson, 2000)
- Prison Education: Contested terrain between ‘optimistic’ and ‘pessimistic’ scholars and theorists on the purpose of prison (Ubah, 2003).
 - (a) Transformative vs prisoners can not change (Duguid and Pawson, 1998).
 - (b) Tool for living vs tool of control (Wilson, 2000, 174).
 - (c) Self selection vs mechanistic (Wilson, 2000; Duguid and Pawson, 1998).
 - (d) Recidivism vs empowerment (Reus and Wilson, 2000).
 - (e) Killing time vs rehabilitation (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).

Research Design

- Qualitative research – critical micro-ethnography (Pane and Rocco, 2009) and case studies (case study 1 male YOI and case study 2 female YOI) (Yim 2014).
- Sources of data (data triangulation)
 - Examination of relevant documents
 - Official government reports
 - SPS reports and other relevant documents
 - Curriculum materials
 - Newspaper/Internet materials
 - Interviews with key informants
 - Government officials in the department of corrections.
 - Prison wardens and managers
 - Teachers who offer courses in prisons
 - Young offenders ,both male and female
 - Officials from non-government organisations
 - Focus group discussions with young offenders

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Situational and Policy Context in Scotland

- Interesting policy detail
 - SPS has no statutory duty to rehabilitate prisoners (Ross, 2012).
 - SPS does recognise the important of rehabilitation.
 - Encourages prisoners to take opportunities which will reduce the likelihood to re-offend and help them reintegrate them back into their community
 - Prisons under the ‘Scottish Prison Service’ (SPS), an agency of the Scottish Government under a Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- One of the Highest Rates of Imprisonment in Europe
 - Although reconviction rates declining slightly (0.6%), along with Wales and England, Scotland has one of the highest rates of imprisonment in Europe per head per population.
- Re-offending rates for young people offenders
 - In Scotland, re-offending rates is highest for young offenders (16-21 years old)
 - 53% re-offend after two years.
 - Young offenders largely reluctant to participate in ‘purposeful activity’, including education and preferring to watch TV instead (HMISP, 2016).

Region	Population (2015)	Prisoners
England and Wales	55 Million – England 3.1 Million – Wales	85400 (2016)
Northern Ireland	1.9 Million	1836 (2014)
Scotland	5.4 Million (2015)	7872 (2016)

(f) Punishment vs Human Rights/public safety (Reuss and Wilson, 2000; Thomas and Murray, 2008).

(g) Cost vs benefit: Keeping law breakers locked up is very expensive (in UK cost per prisoner is £33, 785) (Thomas and Murray, 2008).

(h) Choice vs control (Reuss and Wilson, 2000).

(i) Basic skills vs employability skills (Duguid and Pawson, 2000).

- **Areas of general agreement in the discourse**

Less dispute regarding ‘barriers’ to education in prison: (a) Dispositional barriers,

(b) Effects of prisonisation (negative values of prison sub-culture)

(c) Institutional factors (Czerniawski, 2015; Farley and Pike, 2016; Westreheim and Manger, 2014).

Significance and Potential for Impact



- Influence policy towards further improvement of prison education
- Reveal the constraints and possibilities of aligning prison education with the idealism of CfE.
- Suggest ways of improving prison education (pedagogy and engagement) to meet learning outcomes and overall goals of the “purposeful activity” programme.
- Contribute to the debate on the value of offender learning and skills training as critical factors towards offender rehabilitation and criminal desistance.

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